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## India

**Post:** New Delhi

### **FSSAI issues fresh guidelines on labeling of imported products**

**Report Categories:**

Exporter Guide

Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

FAIRS Subject Report

Product Brief

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**Report Highlights:**

On March 23, 2012 the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) published “guidelines related to food import clearance process by FSSAI’s Authorized Officers,” on its website. These guidelines elaborate the labeling requirements of different kinds of packages of food consignments imported into India. The guidelines also elaborate the clearance process for the proprietary food, food supplements/dietary supplements, functional foods, nutraceuticals, and other similar products. The FSSAI expects that these guidelines will facilitate trade, while at the same time, ensure the safety of imported food products.

## **General Information:**

**DISCLAIMER:** The information contained in this report was retrieved from the following Government of India website <http://www.fssai.gov.in/>. The U.S. Government makes no claim of accuracy or authenticity.

On March 23, 2012 the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) published “guidelines related to food import clearance process by FSSAI’s Authorized Officers,” on its website. These guidelines elaborate the labeling requirements of different kinds of packages of food consignments imported into India. The guidelines also elaborate the clearance process for the proprietary food, food supplements/dietary supplements, functional foods, nutraceuticals, and other similar products. The FSSAI expects that these guidelines will facilitate trade, while at the same time, ensure the safety of imported food products.

According to the guidelines absences of the vegetarian/non-vegetarian logo, and name and address of importer on the label, are considered “rectifiable labeling deficiencies” which may be dealt with via sticker labels in the customs bonded warehouse at the port. However, absence of name and address of manufacturer, list of ingredients, manufacture date, packing date best-before or expiry date; batch or code or lot number; net weight or volume; or nutritional information, when required, is not rectifiable with sticker labels. All exporters and importers are responsible for ensuring that the food products entering India from the United States are in full compliance with Indian food laws. (See GAIN IN 2002 and IN 2045 for more information.)

## **Details on guidelines:**

- **Published on:** March 23, 2012
- **Effective from:** with immediate effect
- **Effective until:** until further orders
- **Enforcing Authority:** Food Safety and Standards Authority of India
- **Enforcing Ministry:** Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
- **Products affected:** all imported food items ( cereals, pulses, fruits, vegetables, nuts and dry fruits, etc.), including proprietary food, food supplements/dietary supplements, functional foods, nutraceuticals, and other similar products

**Full text of guidelines:** The guidelines are available on the website of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India and can be accessed at : [Guidelines related to imported food clearance process.pdf](#)

See text as attached.

No. 1-17/FSSAI/T/2010 (Part J)  
**Food Safety and Standards Authority of India**  
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare  
Government of India  
FDA Bhavan, Kotla Road,  
New Delhi- 110 002

Dated: 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 2012

**Sub: Guidelines related to Food Import Clearance Process by FSSAI's Authorized Officers –reg.**

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) after due consideration of various operational issues raised by the stakeholders and to facilitate genuine trade while ensuring the mandate of safe food imports in India is issuing the following guidelines/clarifications with immediate effect till further orders or final notification of regulations in this regard, whichever is earlier:

1. In respect of labeling requirements of different kinds of packages of food consignments that are being imported in India, the requisite changes are required to be made in the Food Safety and Standards (Packaging and Labeling) Regulations, 2011. It has been decided by the Competent Authority that for smooth clearance of imported food items till the changes are incorporated in the FSS Regulations, 2011, different kinds of packages of food consignments that are being imported in India should carry the labeling information as enlisted below:

S. No.	Type of package	Minimum labelling requirements
1.	Pre-packaged food or pre-packed food including multi piece package	1. Name of food 2. List of ingredients (Not required in case of single ingredient) 3. Nutritional information 4. Name and complete address of the manufacturer 5. Net quantity 6. Lot/code/batch number 7. Date of manufacture 8. Best before or use by date or date of expiry 9. <i>Information on vegetarian or non vegetarian logo</i> 10. <i>Name and address of the importer</i>

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2.	Wholesale packages (including semi finished/ intermediary food products which will be further processed to make final product & packed as pre-packaged or pre-packed food )	1. Name of food 2. List of ingredients (Not required in case of single ingredient) 3. Name and complete address of the manufacturer 4. Date of manufacture 5. Best before or use by date or date of expiry 6. <i>Name and address of the importer</i>
3.	Primary food like food grains, pulses, fruits, dry fruits, whole spices etc. imported in package	1. Name of food 2. Name and complete address of the packer 3. Date of Packing 4. <i>Name and address of the importer</i>
4.	Primary food like food grains, pulses, fruits, whole spices etc. imported in loose in bulk	1. Name of food* 2. Name and complete address of the importer*
*However, it may also be verified from the relevant documents.		

i. However, in case of wholesale packages, following may also be accepted:

- a) Information on vegetarian/ non vegetarian logo, name and address of the importer which are mandatory labeling requirements under FSS (Packaging and Labeling) Regulations, 2011 are considered as rectifiable labeling deficiencies since these are not commonly practiced globally. Such information, if missing on the imported food consignments in wholesale packages, can be affixed by the importer/CHA upon arrival of the consignment on Indian shores, however, strictly in the custom bonded warehouses.
- b) If date of manufacture is not given in the labels and only date of expiry/best before date/use by date is mentioned in the labels, then it may be verified from the relevant documents like certificate of analysis. However, if date of manufacture is in-built in the batch/lot number, the Authorized Officer, FSSAI may verify the date of manufacture and satisfy himself with the documents provided by the importer along with the bill of entry. If required, he may also seek clarification from the manufacturer/exporter of the source country as regards decoding of the date of manufacture. Balance shelf life of the consignment at the time of import may be calculated from the due date of expiry/best before date printed in the labels and the date of manufacture verified from the available documents.

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- c) If complete address of the manufacturer is not given in the labels and only name of the manufacturer is given, then his address may be verified from the relevant documents like certificate of analysis, invoice etc.
- ii. In case of pre-packaged foods or pre-packed foods or multi-piece packages, if only name of the manufacturer is printed in the labels and his complete address is not printed then, the same may be verified from the relevant documents like certificate of origin etc. Also, if date of manufacture and batch number/lot number is not oriented in the labels then, the same may be verified from the relevant documents like certificate of origin etc. This is applicable for every bill of entry or the consignment or bill of entry or bill of landing filed before issue of these guidelines subject to the condition that importer will furnish undertaking duly notarized to the effect that all his future consignments should comply with the FSS Rules/Regulations/Guidelines to avoid any ambiguity and unnecessary delays in the clearance of their consignments.
2. In case of import of proprietary foods in India, the food items which are being imported in India for the first time, the importer has to get his product approved from the Product Approval Division of Food Safety and Standards Authority of India. However, the food items which are being imported for a long time in the Country and against which no complaints/issues have been reported so far, Product Approval Division may grant provisional approval to these food items under fast track clearance system. Thereafter, on the basis of the laboratory analysis report, the Authorized Officer may issue NOC to these consignments.
3. In case of import of food supplements/dietary supplements, functional foods, nutraceuticals and other similar products, the Authorized Officer, FSSAI may draw the samples from these consignments and send them to FRSL, Ghaziabad as a nodal laboratory for imported food analysis. The normal testing fee and time taken for analysis by the laboratory may not be applicable in these cases.

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4. All food importers in India at the time of import may be insisted upon for applying the valid license to the concerned Designated Officer of Food Safety and Standards Authority of India before import/arrival of their future consignments on Indian shores.

This issues with the approval of Chairperson, FSSAI.

*Adesh*  
*23/3/12*

(Adesh Mohan)

Senior Inspecting Officer

To

1. All Authorized Officers, FSSAI
2. Dr. Arun K. Panda, Joint Secretary (R), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Room No. 254-A, Nirman Bhavan, New Delhi. Telefax: 011-23063156
3. Mr. Sandeep M. Bhatnagar, Joint Secretary (Customs), Room No. 156 B, North Block, Central Board of Excise and Customs, Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance, New Delhi – for information please and with the request to kindly get it circulated to Custom Authorities at various ports of entries.

Copy to:

1. PPS to Chairperson, FSSAI
2. Director (Enforcement)
3. Director (Surveillance), FSSAI
4. Director (QA&S), FSSAI
5. Director (Product Approval), FSSAI
6. FSSAI's website

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